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manner. His Introduction has little historical and no critical value; his notes are meagre and unsatisfactory; in many instances he has neglected to state the source from which he has taken his songs; and he has not furnished a Glossary, without which many of them are unintelligible. He has not given any statement of the comparative dates of different songs; nor has he printed the different readings of the same song. These defects greatly diminish the worth of his volume as a contribution to political and literary history, and leave the field still open for some more faithful editor.

- 6.—*Brief Biographies.* By SAMUEL SMILES, Author of "Self-Help," and "Life of George Stephenson." With Steel Portraits. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1861. 16mo. pp. 517.

THIS volume comprises a collection of thirty-five biographical sketches, reprinted for the most part from English periodicals, and now brought together at the suggestion of the American publishers. They are in general mere portraits in outline, without any attempt at an elaborate delineation of character, and with few biographical details. But they exhibit a considerable degree of acquaintance with the topics discussed, and are characterized by the same qualities which mark Mr. Smiles's previous and more elaborate works. Among the subjects of the sketches are poets and inventors, scholars and statesmen, writers of fiction and historians, critics and men of science; and this wide range of subjects indicates at once the catholicity of the writer's taste, and the cause of his occasional failures to give a clear view of the lives and characters described. Few persons could treat such diverse topics with equal success as to all of them; and in the case of Mr. Smiles this difficulty is enhanced by the extreme brevity to which he has sometimes restricted himself. Thus many of his sketches do not extend beyond nine or ten pages, and the longest and best of them, the memoir of James Watt, covers but little more than fifty pages. With this qualification the volume is interesting and instructive. Its style, however, is sometimes careless and inelegant, indicating haste in the preparation of many of the papers, and on the whole it gives a much less favorable idea of Mr. Smiles's powers than we derive from his other works.